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ABSTRACT

A qualitative study was undertaken to examine similarities and differences in the leadership styles of two successful private liberal arts college presidents and two successful public two-year college presidents. During site visits, a series of semi-structured, open-ended interviews were conducted with the president, senior staff and faculty, trustees, members of presidential search committees, students, and union officers. The study indicated that the success of the college was linked to the success of the presidents' leadership styles. Each college had developed a clearly identified mission and the presidents exercised a strong leadership role in promoting this vision. The specific design and implementation of new projects and programs, however, is usually delegated to administration, who are held to high standards. In addition, each college in the study played a significant role in its local community, with the two-year college presidents expressing the idea that their colleges were owned by the community. All of the presidents were also fiercely proud of their colleges' instructional programs and academic quality and used the physical plant to enhance the college culture. Finally, change at the colleges in the study was driven by faculty ideas, but usually supported and enhanced the vision articulated by the president. Both presidents at the two-year colleges had "open-door" policies for staff and faculty to discuss new ideas. (Contains 40 references.) (KP)

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College presidents can and do energize their faculty and staff and move their institutions to new heights. This presentation will highlight how some successful long-term college presidents have done just that, taking their colleges in new directions, while enriching their communities' academic, economic, and cultural lives. The information presented, based on an in-depth qualitative research project, will review some of the excitement and the pitfalls identified in the study of the leadership of four successful long-term college presidents. It asks the question: What can we learn by examining the profiles of these presidents from the standpoint of leadership and its impact on administrative practice and strategic planning?
Partial funding for the study has come from TIAA/CREF.

Background on the Study

Over the last several years, numerous articles have emphasized the role of college presidents, and the president's commitment to the planning process. Clark Kerr (1984) suggested that many presidents who had short tenure focused on short-term problems. Clark Kerr (1984) and Derek Bok (1993) have stated that the president is one of the few people who can see the institution as a whole. Since the 1960's, strategic planning and thinking have become increasingly associated with an institution's ability to identify and to achieve its goals and objectives (Hamermesh, 1983) (Robert, 1993). Many of the initiatives which presidents

undertake have multi-year horizons. If the president leaves within a short period, the initiatives may never reach fruition. Long-term thinking, however, does not refer to the leadership of the institution adopting a rigid plan that will take years to implement, but rather adopting one which will "view everything as open to change, and settle for nothing less than constant movement through innovation in every aspect of the system" (Passmore, 1994, p 39).

The Study

This presentation will cite examples from a research study of four successful long-term presidents, whose average tenure exceeds fifteen years, and who have remained exceptionally vibrant throughout their tenures. Two are presidents of private four-year liberal arts colleges, two are presidents of public two-year colleges. The colleges represent types of institutions which, in many cases, have been experiencing leadership and financial problems. Yet these four colleges have maintained their enrollments at a time of increased competition for students; these colleges have strengthened academic programs when many colleges cut back; they have maintained and improved their physical plants, while many colleges deferred maintenance. While not feeling flush, they have worked diligently to keep their operations in the black and succeeded. The study reveals that these things have not happened by chance. These results are at least partially a result of leadership which is focused on what a college needs to be and do today to survive in its particular competitive arena. This paper, with emphasis on the two-year college presidents in the study, will illustrate how the presidents' leadership practices have brought about change in their particular organizations. The change may have been the result of intense strategic planning or the evolution of campus debate and dialogue in incremental decision making. Each change brings the college closer to the president's articulated vision of what the college might become.

> The president has, or should have, the power of persuasion; appeals to a larger vision are limited only by the ingenuity of the leader (Boyer, 1988).

At each institution, through purposive sampling, the researcher has conducted a series of semi-structured, open-ended interviews. Individuals interviewed include the president, senior staff and faculty members, trustees, members of the search committee for the current president, and, when present, union officers. The researcher has attended a variety of meetings including planning committees, presidential staff meetings, faculty meetings, faculty retreats, trustee meetings, trustee planning committee meetings and a variety of college functions. In addition, the researcher has reviewed and analyzed a variety of institutional documents and other data relating to the governance, the presidency, and the planning process at each institution. The findings are also based upon interview transcripts and field notes.

This research has identified some common factors in each of the successful cases studied to date. There is a good "fit" between these long-term presidents and the institutions they serve. This fit appears to have strengthened during the tenure of the presidency. A possible reason for this may result from the relationship of the president's vision for the college and the constituents' reaction to that vision. Each president included in this study has a vibrant vision for his institution. The vision has excited and stretched many of the faculty and the staff to challenge existing thoughts and practices, while considering new programs and ventures. In the terms of organizational theory, the vision, which may be the president's own, or may be the president's interpretation of others' ideas, "...sets up a framework that allows others to connect with what is being proposed to the shared values of the institution" (Birnbaum, 1992). For example, at one of the colleges in the study, several faculty, administrators, and trustees mentioned that the president's vision for the college is far ahead of that of the faculty. One senior administrator said while the college is establishing a new program, the president is already considering what needs to be done to strengthen and broaden it. Several people mentioned how far their college had progressed during the current president's tenure. At another institution, those interviewed stressed that the vision as articulated by the president is

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not his own. He is a president who articulates the ideas of others most successfully. In this case, the vision is a compilation of the thinking of many on the campus, woven together by the president in a fashion that unifies and energizes the campus community.

The Start of a Long-Term Presidency

According to a member of the search committee for one of the two-year college presidents, the background and presentation to the committee of the candidate they selected was different from the other candidates. While he was less of an academic than the other candidates, he had an agenda of what he thought the college could do and become. The college was in poor shape financially and physically. This candidate truly understood finances, which the previous academic president did not. The committee was intrigued. Once appointed, one of the first tasks of the new president was to take "an aggressive role in reaffirming the identity and mission of the college." A member of a college advisory committee mentioned that when appointed, the president immediately established himself as the campus leader, "by example, by action. He is an able delegator. He listens." The president realized immediately that the academic vice president had a thorough and well-developed educational philosophy that could benefit the institution. He also realized that as president, he should not meddle in the day to day academic activities, but leave that to the academic vice president and others. At the outset the president changed the administrative structure of the college. He hired a strong financial vice-president. The president was a risk-taker who did and continues to "throw himself behind new programs" (Faculty interview). Another faculty member of the search committee mentioned the president's positive attitude and that he embraced a "refreshing look at where the college could go." A member of an outside advisory board mentioned that they had hoped that the new president would "expand and revitalize the college." The member credited some of the president's early and ongoing success to the fact that he is "vibrant and dynamic" with the ability to continually seek out new programs and

"always look for new ways to fund new programs." The president, who was immediately aware of how important the community was to the college and how important the college could be to the community, joined the region's Economic Development Council. The result was that the college took full advantage of a thriving economy in the early 80's.

Throughout his tenure, now exceeding fifteen years, the administration of this college has been lean. The president has delegated to management and not interfered with their responsibilities, provided they perform. He holds them to high standards. One faculty member, close to the president, said that the president delegates more to some people than to others. In the same fashion, some are held more accountable. If someone does not do his or her job, the president may assign some or all of the task to another person. He recognizes people for their contributions, although praise for specific tasks is more likely to be given publicly than privately (This is true for three of the four presidents in this study). Several of those interviewed mentioned how much the president "cares about his people." The community trusts him and he has earned and continues to earn that trust. He is very concerned about the college's reputation, its integrity, and its students. As one faculty member said, "The college exists for its students."

The member of the advisory committee reflected upon the quality, participation, and input of the advisory committee. Some of the members head organizations or corporations which hire alumni. Others are community leaders. The members of the committee are proud and pleased to be able to help the college and feel that the president listens to them carefully and uses their skills to benefit the college, which in turn benefits the community. The president encourages them to question and to "be openly critical." Among the early controversial issues with the committee were the museum and some of the land and building acquisitions. The public walkway through the campus to the historic fort (located prominently on the campus and later to the museum), initially a concern for the local residents, is now a

source of community pride. From the outset, the president has focused on long-term issues and seems to have a sense of how they might strengthen the college and its relationship to the community. With each additional success, his dreams for the college and its campus seem more plausible and his arguments for change more convincing.

The College and the Community

Each college in this study plays a significant role in its specific community. The two-year college presidents in the study stress that, as community colleges, they exist to serve the needs of their specific communities. One president emphasized that colleges such as his are owned by the community. This seems to be an attitude of many presidents, even if a substantial part of their college's financial support comes from state rather than local sources. For these presidents and the community colleges they serve, community means region, whether it be a metropolitan area, a mixture of urban, rural, and suburban, or whatever. Within these regions, the colleges seem to look at the educational requirements and needs from a variety of perspectives. These include: the educational needs of: the traditional-age college student, individuals who are trying to improve their career opportunities, corporations who are trying to enhance the skills and knowledge of their work force, industry-specific education (such as the allied health professions, high technology, biological or the environmental sciences). The presidents of the community colleges seek to learn the needs of their communities and work closely with local corporate and institutional executives to fulfill those needs. For example, one president mentioned that his college began teaching courses in environmental science at the request of local business executives who had specific environmental problems. At another, members of the president's administrative team and some individuals at the college who worked with video-taping developed, in conjunction with local businesses, a promotional piece to encourage industry to locate in their particular region, emphasizing the availability of talented workers, types of space, training opportunities for employees, and a positive life-style

The presidents of the colleges in this study are sensitive to change in community needs and, in some cases, they or their staff members are involved in regional economic planning committees.

The student does not impact upon the work of the president, yet the student's input and how the college addresses student needs affects the life and success of the president. The varied nature of the courses and students add to the educational and administrative complexity of these institutions. As one president mentioned, for a community college to be successful, it must "be regional and represent the interests of the region." For that president and his particular college, the range of activities, types and levels of courses taught, and the types of students enrolled at this college are similar to those at many community colleges today. Some, especially those from one particular urban areas are ESL students who may have had very little formal education. Another group is those who have never attended college before and may have had difficulty in, or perhaps withdrawn from high school. These students require extensive use of learning laboratories. These learning laboratories help to enable those students who may have had some or significant academic deficiencies to perform college-level academic work successfully. The presidents cite the success of these laboratories as a major victory for the two-year college, for they help to instill the students with intellectual desire and drive. The students become life-long learners, opening new career opportunities and possessing increased self-esteem. The two-year college succeeds where other educational institutions have failed in providing education and opportunity to these students.

Another group of community college students, growing in number, is that which has had some or even completed college. A faculty member at one of the two-year colleges mentioned that the large number of students they had with baccalaureate degrees were looking at the new training as a way to enter a new field. The field may be bio-science, computer science, or architecture, among others. These students, already more academic than the forementioned types, demand courses taught at a high academic level, requiring faculty with

advanced level training and education. Within the last few years the community colleges have taken an increased role in the education and training of health professionals. With the exception of the physician, most of today's health professionals receive at least part of their training at a community or technical college. Another growth area for community colleges is that of corporate education, be they tailer made courses to help a specific company achieve its express needs, computer courses, TQM courses, or human resource courses.

As the presidents start addressing these academic needs of the community, the presidents set the tone so that the college corporate culture understands the needs. This culture begins to focus on what the college might become. Members of the academic community, conscious of institutional objectives, help develop suitable course work and solutions to address specific needs. It requires extensive listening on the part of the president as well as the faculty and administration. The result is that a number of faculty and administrators struggle to achieve new goals - to establish new programs. In some cases they may be modifying existing courses and programs to respond to a changing environment. But it definitely is not "business as usual." "Success has to be the discovery of patterns that emerge through actions we take in response to the changing agendas of issues we identify " (Stacy 1992). It is the ability of the president and others to deal with current issues in a manner that has positive long-term impact on the institution and furthers a vision "anchored to a future reality" (Stacy, 1992).

The President as Academic Leader

The presidents of the colleges in this study are all fiercely proud of what their colleges teach. Each of these institutions emphasizes that its purpose is to serve student needs, yet the two- and four-year colleges in this study have different types of students and faculty objectives At the four-year colleges, the president and faculty discuss the ongoing struggle between

research and teaching and what type balance results in the strongest faculty and the best teachers. Faculty members at the two-year colleges stress that their main focus is on teaching. A struggle for the two-year college is that they very much want to provide the student with a high level of skills within a positive learning environment. One of the presidents emphasized that retention is and has been exceptionally important to him and that increasing the retention rate is one of his top priorities. (In fact, in response to a question asking how he knew if he were doing a good job as president, he replied that he uses a series of measures that include the number of students enrolled, the size and vigor of the faculty, the financial bottom line, the status of the physical plant and how it served the academic and other needs of the students, the needs of the students and their retention rate.) At the same time, this college has very strict academic requirements and has not been victim of grade inflation as have some of our four-year colleges and universities.

Both of the two-year colleges in the study have very strong programs in the allied health professions. The presidents and others work closely with the areas health providers to develop new courses to serve better the community needs and provide the health industry with well qualified, well trained individuals. These programs are among the colleges' most prestigious and coveted, and are over subscribed. At a planning meeting at one of the colleges, there was extensive debate about the admissions process for the nursing program. Because of the demand for the program and the strength of the applicant pool, virtually all students who were accepted into the nursing program had graduated from a four-year college and had significant work experience. The item the committee was debating was what were the requirements of the nursing program and was the current strength of the applicant pool forcing them to have admission requirements which really had nothing to do with potential job performance. A similar discussion at the other college was more complicated because they had several minority candidates which might have met the theoretical standards for the program, but were not at all equal to the average qualifications of the applicants in the pool.

A strain at some two-year institutions exist between those faculty who teach day and those who teach evening courses. Some of this results from the different hiring practices of full and part-time faculty. An issue that surfaced at one of the colleges illustrated how the president involves himself in delegating to solve specific problems, and why it is necessary to address issues in a forth-right manner. Some faculty members learned that within the department of continuing education, certain adjunct faculty members were not teaching by the syllabus. Those who raised the issue were concerned that for the courses in question, the college might not be delivering to the students what it had promised. The president called a meeting of the dean of continuing education and a highly respected faculty member who serves as an assistant to the academic vice president. The dean of continuing education was not aware of the problem. The assistant to the academic vice president, viewed as one who understands issues and gets a job done quickly, obtained the necessary syllabi, met with the offending faculty members and resolved the issue. According to faculty and administrators, the president helps to resolve problems by knowing what needs to be done and who can and will do it expeditiously.

At issue here is a thread running through many of the points considered and decisions made at this institution: What is our objective? How are we trying to accomplish it? Are we delivering to our students what we have promised? If not, how can we? Such thinking should "represent the conceptual underpinning of the organization and its raison d'être" (Robert, 1993, p.190). The president's vision encourages and reinforces the faculty's desire to develop new programs and courses and to strive to fulfill the students' needs.

Presidents Use The Physical Plant to Enhance College Culture

Each of the colleges in this study takes great pride in its campus and physical plant. Three of the four institutions have enjoyed substantial improvements to their campuses during

the tenure of the current president. At the fourth, the campus and its buildings have been a continual source of pride to the community, one that has only increased during the current presidency. The following examples illustrate the concerns that these presidents have about how the campus reflects the corporate culture and the president's vision for the college.

An example of the complexity of campus design and development occurred at one of the two-year colleges within the study as they considered opening a new urban campus in the heart of a city with a substantial, poor, minority population. The background and planning for this new campus was complicated by the strengths and traditions of the existing college campus. The main campus for this college, located several miles away from the new urban one, opened a few years before the current president arrived in 1975 and enjoys a magnificent setting, in the country, overlooking a lake. The population on this campus, faculty, administration, and students, is primarily white, middle class. The main campus comprised several handsome modern brick and masonry buildings in a very impressive setting. The president of this college has a high sense of expectation regarding campus appearance and maintenance. The college maintains its grounds and the buildings well, and the landscaping and plantings greatly enhance the setting. The college consulted with a distinguished arboretum in choosing and placing some of their plantings. The result is that a visitor to the campus immediately feels that much thought and planning have gone into this campus design, and that it is maintained with great care. This is no easy task in an era of tight budgets.

On the first floor of the administrative building on the main campus, adjacent to the library, is an art gallery. The gallery has revolving displays of art and photography, which frequently is that of students or faculty members. The gallery is open to the public. Displays are reviewed in the local school newspaper as well as in some of the areas regional papers. The college tries to keep its various constituents informed on its activities. The president believes that the college can and does enrich the community culturally. From time to time, the

college students will present a dramatic performance or a musical. The president and his wife are recognized as patrons of these activities. The chairman of the board of trustees emphasized how these activities have enhanced the cultural life of the community. She credits the president's strong commitment to these cultural activities as one of the factors that differentiated this community college from several others in its state.

The standards and ambiance of the existing campus placed substantial challenges on the college as it prepared to open the second campus. The college had a well-developed planning process and had very definite ideas on what it needed for its urban campus. The problem was to find suitable and affordable space. The president heard of an office building which might be available. He quickly assembled a team of people, including both college and community leaders to pursue the acquisition. Shortly thereafter the college was fortunate to receive as a gift a well-constructed, modern office building. As one of the senior administrators mentioned, the president would have loved to conduct all the negotiations himself, but he new that a prominent local citizen could do the job more effectively. Because of the location of the building and the fact that it was located in an urban area largely populated by minorities, the college was able to receive over $1 million from the state to refurbish the building into classroom and laboratory space. The donated building met the needs as outlined through the college's planning process exceptionally well.

Once the new building was acquired, a major consideration became what programs to house in the new facility. The president was convinced that the college should not have a majority campus and a minority campus. Consequently the president and the chairman of the department of nursing decided that the nursing department would be one of the first programs to move from the old campus to the new. The nursing program was arguably the college's most prestigious program, and one where most all faculty, administrators, and students were white, middle class. Placing these students at the new campus would help balance the large

number of minority students from the urban area who wanted to enroll in ESL and other programs. At the outset, members of the nursing staff, faculty members especially, were extremely upset. They felt threatened by the location of the new facility. Within a few weeks, they realized that the new space was superb, especially their new laboratories. The parking was secure, the building safe. They realized that their fears were not justified. Three years after the building opened, it housed all of the college's allied health professional and law enforcement courses. Well over 1000 students attended courses at that campus. The college began to look for an additional building in the immediate urban vicinity to house additional academic programs and classrooms, so that the total students enrolled would exceed 2000. The president emphasized that with a student population of over 2,000, the college could have a richer curriculum and provide a stronger education than is economically possible at a small public institution.

At the other two-year college in the study, the physical plant was in a state of disrepair when the current president arrived in 1980. Handsome old buildings were neglected during a period when the college ran significant deficits and deferred building maintenance. The early charge for this president included: turn around the deficit, serve the academic needs of the community, and save the physical plant. At the time this president began his tenure, the college campus was fenced off from its local community. One of his first tasks the president undertook was the removal of the fence to make the campus available to the local community. Located on the campus was an old fort. It was easy to create walking paths through the campus to and around the fort. While many members of the local community were initially leery and concerned that it might cause community problems, within a relatively short period of time, the walk actually improved the relationship of the college to the local community. Through careful stewardship of resources, identification of institutional priorities, and successful acquisition of additional resources, this campus now enjoys a new life. Several of the mid-19th century buildings are now restored. They reflect their proud heritage while

serving as functional, modern college buildings. The college constructed a handsome new brick campus center housing a library, dining halls, meeting rooms, a learning center, a bookstore, and various offices serving student needs. There is now a museum adjacent to the fort which is open to the public and dedicated to the area's local history. Another building, recently refurbished, functions as a small inn and is run by the college students studying hotel management. As the college has flourished during this period, (and in conjunction with its long-range plans), it has acquired additional, abutting properties to enable it to enhance its overall campus design and integrity. Schematic drawings are available which show how the campus might look a few years hence. These offer hope and promise and also help provide guidance to and a framework for people planning future programs and spaces.

An example at one of the four-year colleges illustrates how through careful planning, space utilization and reallocation, its campus now functions more smoothly than it did in the past. An item that was considered quite controversial at the start of this study was the construction of a new bell tower near the student center. In spite of the fact that the cost of the tower was financed entirely through gifts designated to pay for its construction, many faculty members were critical of the president, trustees, and the administrative decision that allocated funds for this project. However, after the completion of the tower, it became a focal point for a host of college activities. At commencement, for example, students marched through the tower's bottom arches. Utilization of the tower quickly became part of college ritual and culture. Consequently, within one-plus years of its completion, most of the opposition to its construction had disappeared and campus lore and legend included the tradition of the bell tower. The success of this activity illustrates the comments of Kerr (1984) and Bok (1993) that the president can see issues that benefit the entire community and college life, while some individuals see only these those issues which affect them directly.

Another interesting event on this campus was the placing and design of a new field

house, construction of which began in 1993. At this college, most of the buildings are of a modest size. The athletic facilities, which at some colleges are a distance away from the academic and administrative buildings, here are located as an integral part of one of the campus quadrangles. Compounding matters was the fact that the campus was extremely flat, so that it would be difficult to hide the new building. The college wanted to make certain that the new field house was not out of proportion with the other campus buildings and would add to, not detract from, campus integrity. To achieve this objective, the college constructed the field house so that a substantial portion of it is hidden under ground. This type of careful planning helps reinforce campus culture and increase the communities pride in the institution.

At each of the colleges in the study, the campus is a significant source of pride. It visually illustrates that the college cares about its students and documents the fact that the organization is well-run. Buildings are not monuments to an architect or a donor on the successful colleges here, rather they are functional and help to further the mission and vision of the institution. "Physical space arrangements influence not only who we talk to, but who we really know; who we feel close to, and who we are afraid of or avoid" (Kotter, 1995, p.109). How an institution organizes and uses its campus can impact upon the institutional culture.

How Change Occurs on These Campuses

> Maximum flexibility (in an organization) is attained when each individual is free to do his or her own thing: but organizational synergies are gained from sharing resources, pursuing common strategies, and working together independently, all of which require some form of centralized control (Passmore, 1994, p.205)

Much of the change on these campuses is driven by faculty ideas, but it supports and enhances the vision as articulated by the president. These presidents encourage and support the ideas of others, but are always asking and emphasizing that the end product should benefit the student. An example at one of the two-year colleges is its computer program. The faculty member in

charge of the program is interested in communication. He saw the PC as a form of communication. He discussed his plan with appropriate members of his department and the president. The president was extremely impressed with the creativity of the proposal and the objective which the faculty member had, and for a very modest cash outlay. One of the aspects of the program includes gathering some old computer parts and encouraging students to construct their own computers. The students end up knowing the theory behind computer applications and also exactly how computers operate. In addition the faculty member, with the aid of the students, has established a computer network for the students as well as an electronic bulletin board for the campus. The computer program has become one of the campus flag ships. In this case, as well as in several other situations cited to show the excitement, timeliness, and significance of courses offered, the president, administrative members, and faculty members themselves encourage and boast of the college community's initiative.

At this college, the vice president for academic affairs and the president encourage innovation. Innovation is part of the corporate culture. The president listens to the community and to industry. The faculty have a great deal of freedom to do things, but they are required to become advocates for their own ideas. They need to have a well-developed plan, state how it fits into the mission of the college, how it relates to other courses and the college's long-range objectives. The faculty member needs to obtain the support of the department, dean etc. The president is very much in charge, but is very supportive of the ideas of others. It is the excitement and responsiveness of the institution that increases the college's reputation and visibility in the community. The president is referred to as the college's number one P.R. person. Faculty, administrators, and trustees stress that the president encourages the faculty, helps provide money and equipment for new ideas, likes practical courses, creates a positive image, and does not want people at the college to be unhappy. The academic vice president is recognized as a nuts and bolts person, and the president uses him appropriately. The president

is interested in ideas, not in details. This college rewards teaching. Those who teach truly love teaching. One senior faculty member mentioned that there is "genuine affection between many faculty members and (the president)." This sometimes causes problems with the administrative team who feel that the faculty have by-passed them and gone directly to the president with new ideas.

There is a great deal of institutional pride throughout this college. "He has evolved the institution way beyond where they expected. (The president) is extremely loyal to the faculty and the staff. He offers them now financial rewards for performance and there are no consequences for lack of performance" (Interview with senior faculty member who served on the search committee). The president is determined that the new programs will work. He is a team player with his peers and has helped form a six college consortium which allows students at each college to cross register and take courses at other institutions. The president is fully aware that the job markets are changing and that large numbers of people in his state may become unemployed. He and the members of the college faculty and staff are aware of what skills people in their area need to have jobs. Approximately 1/3 require a high school diploma and some training. This number is decreasing. Approximately 1/3 require a baccalaureate or higher earned degree. The other 1/3 require some type of technological skills. For those jobs that require technological skills, critical thinking and problem-solving skills are increasingly important. A faculty member emphasized that the two year colleges are "the only place where you can provide a quality education that interweaves theory with practice." The president is constantly talking with members of the business community to determine what types of people they need and looking for new ideas that he can take back and implement at the college.

This president does not like meetings without specific agendas. Consequently there are few regularly scheduled meetings on this campus. Over 80 percent of the faculty attended a faculty meeting which the researcher attended. On faculty member mused, "faculty meetings

such as we had this morning are not held regularly, but rather whenever there is a specific need for one. The advantage of this is that the faculty are busy and don't spend time going to meetings that are not necessary. The disadvantage is that sometimes people miss information that they would like to know" (There are bi-weekly college communications published, but those are not widely read).

A faculty member emphasized that the president likes to see change happen. The faculty take pride in how supportive the president has been with issues of affirmative action, gender, and disability. Rather than being rigid or threatened by change, "he embraces it and encourages it." He listens carefully and seems to be able to interweave how the change can strengthen the college and its campus culture. By carefully delegating specific implementation tasks to appropriate people, he has spread out the power and authority on campus to achieve institutional goals.

Many long-term faculty and administrators mentioned how surprised they were initially by the president's extensive involvement in community activities. These included, among other things, extensive involvement with the chamber of commerce, the church, and the symphony orchestra. Several people mentioned that at the outset, they could not understand why the president was spending so much time with the symphony board. They soon realized that wherever he was he was considering "how that specific organization relates to the college" (Faculty interview). Now they can quote examples of how these affiliations have directly benefited the college, whether it is in helping to develop new programs, the hiring of alumni, or the donation of cash, equipment, or property.

Both of the presidents of the two-year colleges had "open door policies." The presidents felt these were important because anyone could come into the president's office and discuss issues or new ideas. The staff members were somewhat less enthusiastic about these

policies, for they felt that the faculty frequently circumvented them to get the president's opinion on an issue rather than going through "proper channels." This could use further study. At one of the colleges, the president decides which staff to involve in a particular decision based on which ones he feels are most appropriate and will work towards a strong effective solution. As one department chair emphasized, "He wants to know how it can be done, not why it can't."

Conclusion

One thing that is certain in looking at these colleges which have successful long-term presidents is that the president and a substantial number of faculty and administrators are constantly fine-tuning the institution to serve its constituents better. The presidents are "self-confident and positive" (Fisher, 1991) and they instill self-confidence and a positive outlook to other college constituencies. Their vision for the college is the driving force for them and many of their constituents. They are aware that the world is changing and that their institution must change to if it is to retain its current stature.

> Clearly, the president is the only person in the college whose view is not constrained by role, and he or she must be the person who interprets the institution's mission and program in the context of current social needs. The community college president must be as expert in assessing social issues and as well versed in educational developments as the biology professor is in his or her discipline. By role, the president is the institution's public spokesperson and is looked to for leadership. He or she has the most power to shape to shape the institution's direction and decisions. Most important, major program changes or improvements are likely when they are supported by the chief executive, and their prospects for success are greatest when the chief executive provides necessary leadership (McCabe, 1988).

As the colleges move towards their vision it is clear that the corporate strategy has to have an impact on the allocation of resources (Robert, 1994, p.172). Educational institutions, like other organizations today, are increasingly lean, but the necessary resources need to be

allocated to those areas which will assure success (Robert, 1994, p.208). The president needs to have the confidence that the vision for the institution is appropriate and that it serves the needs of the students and those of the institutions various constituencies. The president needs to establish or maintain a culture that is constantly learning and teaching others that the learning process should never stop (Passmore, 1994).

> People need to know how to participate, how to manage conflict, how to work in groups, how to solve problems, how to reach consensus, how to listen, how to value diversity, how to give and receive feedback, how to communicate effectively, and how to talk to customers (Passmore, 1994, p. 117).

For these objectives to become a reality, the members of a community need to understand its mission and vision, believe it is reachable and in their best interest. A clear vision as articulated by the president, plus the president's ability to mobilize the community, will have a major impact on how the institution is able to position itself in its particular segment of academe. The success of an institution does not happen by chance.

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